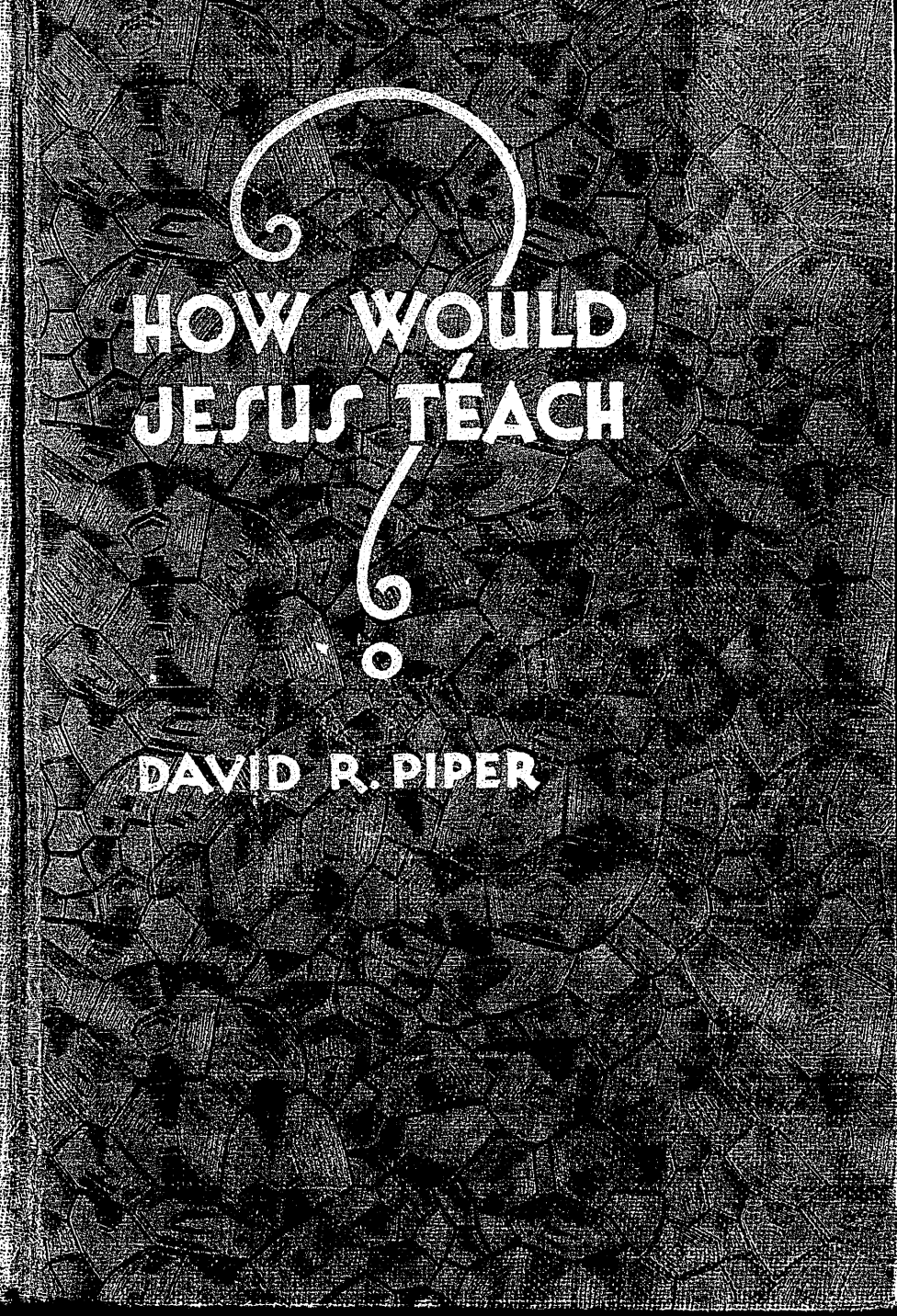

HOW WOULD
JESUS TEACH
?
DAVID R. PIPER

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How Would Jesus Teach?

By

DAVID R. PIPER

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Dedicated to
my father, the wisest teacher
I have ever known

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FOREWORD

The newly appointed curriculum committee of a large Illinois Sunday-school was trying to map out a series of aims or objectives to present to the workers, in order to give them a clear idea of goals to be attained in the work of administration and teaching. In preparation for this task each member was asked to draw up a brief statement of objectives as listed by some well-known authority. One member was to report on Coe, another on Bower, a third on Athearn, a fourth on Paul Vieth. By comparing and simplifying these reports it was assumed the committee could devise a set of objectives that would duly impress the workers with the largeness of their task. And, of course, the committee wished above everything to be up with the times and to state its objectives in accepted educational terms. At the next meeting it was found that one member had read his assignment without understanding it, and so had brought the book for the new director of religious education to interpret, if possible. Two of the others brought statements copied verbatim from the books they had read. The fourth committeeman reported that he had found nothing satisfactory in the authority whose books he had studied, and had decided to make a little study of the Gospels to see if he could discover the objectives of Jesus. "Anyhow," he added, "Jesus started this movement that we

call Christian religious education and it occurred to me that he probably is as good an authority as any!" The director looked surprised. The other members smiled. And then the common sense of it all dawned on them. They ended by drawing up a statement of objectives for their school based on what they conceived to be the teaching aims of Jesus, stated in simple English.

Do modern leaders in religious education, as a whole, really believe that Jesus is the supreme authority in the movement he began? Or is there a clearly discernible tendency to ignore the aims and methods of the Master in shaping the course of modern religious education? The author believes there is, and if he is right, Sunday-school workers everywhere need to study and answer for themselves the question, How would Jesus teach? They need constantly to guard against adopting methods or materials which do not lead to the true goals of religious training and Christian character development.

Just how much they need to be on their guard may be indicated by another incident which occurred recently in one of the largest Detroit churches of a denomination whose religious education leaders are leaning hard in the direction of liberalism. This church, under the leadership of a director of religious education and the pastor, had rejected the Graded Lesson materials furnished by their denomination and adopted those of an-

other publishing firm except in the Intermediate Department, where a homemade project course in Bible study was being used. A representative of the denomination visited the school to investigate. After looking over the newly adopted lesson material he said: "The trouble with this material is that it has too much Bible in it." The pastor answered quietly, "That is a very good recommendation for it." The point of this incident will be enhanced if we record the fact that this church is not Fundamentalist, and its pastor is generally regarded as a progressive minister, in touch with all the movements of our day. He is, in fact, one of America's foremost pulpiteers.

This little book is written in the conviction that Jesus is still today the greatest authority on teaching his own religion. The reasons for this conviction do not rest on the fact of Christ's deity alone, but on the power and effectiveness of his teaching. No modern pedagogue has ever equalled in moral and spiritual results the achievements of Jesus as a teacher. Whether the Bible should remain the one great textbook of our church schools and Sunday-schools today, and the manner in which it should be used to teach religion, are among the questions which a study of Jesus' methods will answer.

The author has made his own first-hand study of all the matters discussed in the following pages, and he wishes to urge all readers not to rest con-

tent with what is said here, but to study the Gospels for themselves with a view to verifying and amplifying these conclusions.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Hodder and Stoughton for permission to quote from "Christ and Modern Education," by Canon Charles E. Raven; and to The Association Press for permission to quote a volume which the writer wishes also to recommend to all readers for further study: "Jesus, the Master Teacher," by Herman Harrell Horne.

CHAPTER I

THE RABBI OF NAZARETH

JESUS was a rabbi, a teacher. To say this and to lay stress upon it may seem to be considering only one side of his many-sided personality. Whole books have been written about Jesus as a working man—the Carpenter of Nazareth. Other volumes have treated his career as that of a great social worker. Still others have dwelt upon the purity and charm of his literary genius, for though he wrote not a line himself, except once when he scrawled some words in the sand, he is known as the perfecter of a great literary form, the parable, and as a master of epigram. To think of Jesus predominantly in these roles belittles him. But to speak of Jesus as a teacher does not belittle him, nor need it obscure his unique work of redemption and his unique personality as the Son of God. With Nathanael we can call Jesus Rabbi (teacher) and in the same breath we can call him the Son of God (John 1: 49). There is no conflict here, for God himself is our Teacher, and the universe is his schoolroom and laboratory.

The work of Jesus' ministry was threefold. "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness" (Matt. 4: 23).

But in spite of the threefold nature of his ministry —teaching, preaching, and healing—folks did not call him the Preacher. In spite of the many miracles recorded in the Gospels, and many others which were not recorded, his followers did not call him the Miracleman. People did not address him, " Great Healer," but " Good Teacher." The word translated " Master " in the Authorized Version means " Teacher."

Even Jesus' works of healing were made into life situations and illustrative incidents to drive home his teaching. When he healed the centurion's servant (Matt. 8: 5-13) he used the Roman captain's faith as a text from which to teach a view of the kingdom of God which was radically new to his hearers. When he healed the paralytic who was let down through the roof (Matt. 9: 1-8) he used the incident to teach and demonstrate his divine authority. Before healing the man with the withered hand in the Temple, on the Sabbath day (Luke 6: 6-11, parallel Matt. 12: 9-13), he discussed with the Pharisees the essentials of true Sabbath observance.

Preaching for Jesus was simply a form of teaching. His discourses had instruction as their main purpose. The Sermon on the Mount is a magnificent series of precepts and principles, aptly illustrated and applied to life situations, and its purpose was to set forth the kind of life which is

expected of those who become his followers, members of his kingdom.

No wonder, then, that all who knew Jesus—his friends, casual acquaintances, and even his critics, spoke and thought of him not as a preacher or a healer primarily, but as a teacher. This was true everywhere and through all his life. In his early Judean ministry Nicodemus called him a "teacher come from God." In Galilee, near the beginning of his work there, when Matthew made a feast for Jesus, the Pharisees asked the disciples, "Why eateth your master (teacher) with publicans and sinners?" Later, in Perea, the rich young ruler addressed him as teacher (Luke 18: 18), as did also the lawyer who asked, "Who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10: 25). And during the last week before the crucifixion the scribes and Pharisees who set word traps for him when they met him in the Temple called him Teacher. All through his ministry he accepted this title, and he called his followers disciples, which means pupils.

An Apostolic Succession of Teachers

When Jesus gave his final commission to the Eleven he told them to teach all peoples everything which he had taught them to observe. The mantle of the apostles has fallen upon all who are truly called to teach in our Sunday-schools today and who have accepted their calling with sincerity of heart. Theologians may continue world without

end to discuss the apostolic succession in the ministry; but here is a true apostolic succession—of all those laymen or ministers who are called to succeed the apostles in teaching the truths which Jesus taught. Laymen should hold their voluntary calling as teachers in no less honor than pastors hold the call to preach. In fact, if we are true teachers, it is no less a full-time work. Even though we work eight hours a day to make a living, or twelve to make a home, we never cease to be teachers; and every worth-while experience may be turned to account for those whom we teach. In fact, all unconsciously, we shall by our lives be teaching many who do not belong to our class.

Where Jesus Taught

Was there any place where Jesus did not teach? It was while sitting on a well curb that he taught the woman of Samaria the greatest lesson of her life. It was while sitting in a boat that he taught the multitudes who followed him to the seashore from all over Galilee. He taught in the streets of villages where children were at play, and along the open road on long walks with his friends and pupils. He taught on the cool mountainside and down in the baking, steaming gorge of the Jordan. He taught sitting at the banquet tables of rich Pharisees and outcast publicans. And when surrounded by enemies who sought to tantalize and trap him, he still was the Great Teacher and asked



Hofmann **Christ Teaching From a Boat**

them such searching questions that they had to face the truth against their will. One of the greatest lessons Peter ever learned from him was taught about a camp fire where Jesus had cooked breakfast on the lake shore (John 21: 1-17). Yes, Jesus also taught in the Temple porches and in synagogues. But have you ever thought how much would have been left out of the Gospels if they had recorded only those teachings which he gave within the walls of some building?

A real teacher is a teacher all the time, everywhere. The smallest part of our work may be done within the walls of a church building, even though that is all-important. Jesus certainly believed in week-day contacts with his pupils! He taught people how to live while they were engaged in the normal activities of life. So much did he believe in, and engage in, social intercourse that when his enemies sought to caricature him the worst they could do was to call him a glutton and a winebibber. How can we teach folks unless we know them, and how can we know them unless we share life with them?

In passing, there is one thing to note, namely, that while sharing fully in the joys of social occasions Jesus remained always the Teacher both in word and bearing. It is unthinkable that he should ever have done cheap things in an effort to be regarded by his pupils and followers as a "good fellow." We must share life with our pupils as Jesus

did, and with similar attitude and bearing. If we do this, we shall not be wanting in life situations through which to make our teaching practical.

Have You Ever Done This?

There comes to mind a certain teacher of young men who interrupted his full schedule to spend an autumn afternoon with one of his boys on a nutting trip in the woods. The boy was of a non-church family; his father, in fact, was rather a notorious town character. The nutting expedition was at the boy's invitation. It was a jolly, good time they had and as the boy climbed trees to shake down the nuts while the teacher gathered them up, the conversation turned to questions of life. The nuts that were really cracked that afternoon were the boy's moral and religious problems. A few Sundays later he voluntarily united with the church on confession of faith, and he brought a fellow classmate with him, even as Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus. Has anything like this ever happened in your class?

Would you be willing to postpone the reading of an interesting book, to forego your cherished radio broadcast, to let yourself out of an interesting automobile drive with your family or friends, in order to have a good heart-to-heart social hour with some member of your class who needs help, at a time when his heart is warm toward you and he might be greatly influenced? The right answer to

that question is not a glib "yes," but some instances showing that you have actually done so. If you have never done such a thing and have been teaching very long, is there not something wrong? If Jesus were teaching your class, and were just as busy as you think you are, would he confine his work to a half hour once a week? Jesus did his best teaching in the most unconventional times and surroundings, and that is where we can get closest to our pupils.

Whom Jesus Taught

Jesus taught everybody who was teachable and who came within the range of his voice. Had there been a radio in those days there is little doubt that he would have used it. When Jesus said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," he was announcing that his teaching was applicable to and intended for, all the folks who were willing to open their minds when they pricked up their ears—all who would listen and take to heart his message.

We are too prone today to concentrate our attention on those who already believe, or who belong to church families. Jesus did not do that. He did not say, "There's no use to waste time trying to get that tricky Zacchæus into my class, for he has no interest in religion, and besides, it might disturb some of my good pupils to have to associate with him." He did not say, "Simon is a Zealot, and his radical political views deserve to be denounced."

Instead, he let Simon get into the inner circle of his friends, and at length when the time came to set apart twelve men to be trained for the special work of apostles, Simon the Zealot was one of the Twelve. If we could turn the crusading ardor of radicalism against sin today, the cause of Jesus would have an access of power such as it has not had since the days of the martyrs.

The old-time Sunday-school class was made up chiefly of folks from non-church families; at least there was a large sprinkling of such in almost every class. Too many Sunday-schools today have become church schools not merely in name, but in the fact that their members are almost wholly gathered from within the church. Let us remember that what Jesus really said was, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." He went out of his way to teach and win the folks who stood on the outside of the synagogue looking in—and often they were looking in with a sneer. Not that Jesus cared less for church folks, but that the needs of these others were more urgent. And, strangely enough, they were often more open-minded toward his teaching. How long has it been since you brought into your class a member from a non-church family?

CHAPTER II

JESUS' SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, AND OURS

A SPEAKER at a Sunday-school workers' conference made reference to Jesus and his "Sunday-school class," and in the round-table discussion which followed, a minister rebuked him for his irreverence. A layman, who was the teacher of a men's class, then arose and said that whether the speaker was irreverent in talking of Jesus' disciples as his "Sunday-school class" depended on the sacredness and importance we attach to our work as teachers. If to our minds it is a small, insignificant, and perhaps at times pestiferous duty, then of course the thought of Jesus teaching a Sunday-school class may bring a shock to our sense of propriety. But if we regard our work as a God-given task of the utmost possible importance to Christ and his kingdom, we ought not to see anything irreverent in the idea of Jesus as a Sunday-school teacher. What do you think? Aside from the question of irreverence, is there anything incongruous about the thought of Jesus as a Sunday-school teacher?

To be sure, there were no Sunday-schools in Jesus' day. Jesus' schoolroom was the open road, or the grain fields, or the seashore, or the mountain side, or the village well, or the home of a friend,

or wherever else he might find learners. Instead of teaching one day of the week, he taught seven. But, while Jesus did not have a Sunday-school, he did have disciples or pupils. Only because Jesus' followers were also adherents to him and his cause has the word disciple in our later usage come to mean a believer or adherent.

If Jesus, then, had pupils, the question, did he have a class, is almost irrelevant, since at any rate we can learn a great deal from him about a teacher's relationship to the members of his class, and even something about class organization, aims, and ideals.

Jesus taught people in great crowds. Not all people in these crowds were learners. Some were critics, some were curiosity seekers, some were looking for thrills. On such occasions, Jesus seems to have distinguished between his pupils and all others on the basis of open-minded, thoughtful attention: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Even when Jesus was pressed upon by multitudes, there were at least some occasions when he separated the learners from the throng and gathered them closer to him. This happened one day at the place which since has become known as the Mount of Beatitudes. We speak of the "Sermon on the Mount," but the Scriptures do not say that on this occasion Jesus preached; they say that he "taught them." Further, he sat down to teach them,

assuming the customary attitude of a rabbi with his class before him (Matthew 5: 1).

In too many passages of Scripture where the word disciples is used, we are likely to think only of the Twelve, and to overlook the larger following of pupils Jesus had, who are often included in this term. It was from this larger group of learners whom Jesus gathered about him on the Mount of Beatitudes that he chose the Twelve to be set apart for special training (Mark 3: 13).

A Class Within a Class

This larger group clung to him even after the setting apart of the Twelve. No doubt there were some floaters among them, folks who came and went and came again, folks who were learners while Jesus was in Galilee, but who returned to their homes when he made his journeys into adjoining provinces. We are sure, however, that many besides the Twelve were his pupils throughout most of his ministry. We learn of that group of Galilean women, most of whom he had healed of some disease (Luke 8: 1-3). At least some of them, including Mary Magdalene and the mother of James and John, evidently followed him through Perea and finally to the cross (Matthew 27: 55, 56). We know that this larger group of pupils included at least seventy persons who received some special training from him (Luke 10: 1). The Seventy were trusted followers and must therefore have

been for some time Jesus' disciples or pupils. They constituted what we would today call a temporary committee to perform special duties, after which they made their report and the committee was discharged.

Thus we see that while Jesus had a small special training class of twelve members, there was a larger group of pupils numbering more than seventy; and there was a still larger group who might be said to be on the outer fringe of discipleship, a sort of extension class, less regular, less active, some of whom no doubt were Jesus' sincere pupils while he was in their home village, but who did not or could not follow him about. The Twelve were a class within a class, a smaller circle within two larger ones.

A Modern Example

Does this suggest any new ideas about the extension of class influence? A certain Illinois adult class faced the problem of interesting many men who appeared to have little interest in organized religion, and none at all in the Sunday-school. They reorganized in the form of a forum which meets once a month on a week night. Questions of social, moral, and religious interest are discussed, these questions being chosen by a program committee from a larger list of topics suggested by the various members. The utmost freedom is maintained for the expression of individual views. Many

men belong to the larger group, and attend and participate in these forum meetings, who never before showed any interest. The class meets on Sunday for regular Bible study, and is composed of all those of the larger group who wish to have the advantages of the Sunday meetings. There is a separate membership roll of the Sunday group, but it is a branch of the larger group. The hope and aim, of course, is to enlarge the Sunday Bible class group by drawing from the larger group as the interest grows more active.

Is this in harmony with Jesus' method? How does it compare, for probable results, with the more usual plan of making up a list of prospective members and putting on a whirlwind campaign about once a year to win them, without first developing their interest? Would the Sunday sessions of most classes be more interesting and profitable if the membership were drawn from an already interested group than if partly drawn from people intrigued into joining in order to help the "reds" or the "blues" win the class contest for members? We raise these questions in the hope that they will lead to some profitable thought about the desirability of patterning our class organization, in spirit, at least, after Jesus' methods. It seems true that Jesus selected some of the Twelve from among the larger group of his disciples, but he already had the nucleus for them in the fishermen whom he called to follow him at the very beginning of his

ministry. He recruited his first disciples by direct invitation, and some of these first pupils brought their friends to join the class with them.

The Inner Group

It is this inner group of the Twelve that corresponds most closely to the usual Sunday-school class of today. As intimated in the preceding chapter, they came from various social strata. There was at least one political radical—Simon the Zealot; at least one member whom the ecclesiastical authorities of that day regarded as both unpatriotic and outside the pale of organized religion—Matthew the tax collector. Yet there was a large degree of homogeneity within the group. All of them but Judas Iscariot were Galileans. They had been brought up in the same surroundings, in villages scattered only a few miles apart, and they had therefore a fine background for understanding each other's viewpoints. Is it wise to try to build up a class from people having a wide diversity of tastes and interests? Should we cross social cleavages indiscriminately, or is it better to keep within the natural boundary lines of common social interests and backgrounds? Why did not Jesus include some believing Pharisees among the Twelve, of the type of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa?

These points and queries are of interest in passing, but our chief interest as teachers centers

in Jesus' methods with the Twelve. His teaching methods must be reserved for later chapters. Here we may consider briefly some of his more general methods and attitudes.

Teaching Through Experience

It is notable that in the early days of Jesus' teaching of the Twelve he was more intent on creating in them a strong personal confidence and loyalty toward him than on teaching them what they ought to believe. Similarly, he seems to have chosen the Twelve more for their open-mindedness and sincerity of purpose than for their correctness of belief. Some of them, perhaps all of them, believed him to be the Messiah from the time they became his disciples. But none of them had a correct understanding of his mission and work. Moreover, their belief in him as the Messiah was simply an opinion. Before they could have an unshakable faith in him as the Son of God, they must have experience with him. There is no evidence that Jesus pressed the question of their faith in him until that day at Cæsarea Philippi, when they were discussing the conflicting current opinions about him. They had then heard his wonderful teachings, caught his spirit, been his friends, lived in his presence. They had discovered him for themselves.

Is our method one of indoctrination? Do we put before our pupils certain propositions or creedal

statements and try to argue them into believing as we do? Or, do we first of all lead our pupils to catch the spirit of Jesus, understand his message, enter into his fellowship, and so be led to a real experience which no amount of explanation and argument could ever give them? A mere intellectual belief can always be shaken on intellectual grounds, a personal experience of truth never can be shaken. Jesus took time to have his disciples become acquainted with him personally. Their faith grew from within, was not injected from without.

Attention to Individuals

The modern Sunday-school teacher who spends a half-hour with the lesson on Saturday night or Sunday morning and then goes to the church to present it to the class, and forgets about the class for another week, needs some of the unhurried patience of Jesus as a teacher. We have been talking about the Twelve as Jesus' class, yet it is doubtful whether he often thought of them collectively. Jesus did not simply teach a class, he taught Peter, and Andrew, and James, and John. They had his individual attention. Without this deep understanding of each of them personally Peter would never have been restored after his denial, Thomas might have died a doubter, Philip would never have grasped the truth that to know Jesus was to know the Father. We cannot teach classes or groups, we can only teach persons. To teach

them we must know them. It takes time. It takes fellowship. And for this, we must win the confidence and loyalty of each individual member.

There is a vast difference, too, between preparing a lesson to teach to a class and preparing to teach individuals. The latter requires insight into the special needs, weaknesses, aptitudes of each member; it also requires special preparation of the lesson so as to apply it to each member, awakening his aptitudes, overcoming his weaknesses, meeting his needs.

The Inmost Circle

Some members in every group develop more rapidly than others. Some show deeper spiritual insight, or greater readiness and ability for service. This was true of Jesus' group. Early Jesus recognized the keener understanding and greater possibilities of Peter, James, and John. They became his inmost circle. He gave them special lessons that the others did not have. They alone witnessed his transfiguration; doubtless the others would only have been troubled and mystified by it. They alone were told of the depth of his anguish in the Garden and asked to remain near him while he went alone to pray. Which members of your class are the most sensitive spiritually? Which show the greatest aptitude for leadership in religious work? What special attention are you giving them? What

are you doing to help them find themselves and their special place of service?

There must be such close sympathy between us and our pupils that every one of them will feel free to talk over with us his doubts, perplexities, and problems, as well as his most sacred hopes and most cherished aspirations. To win and keep such confidence, we must be worthy of it, and we must have the patient friendliness of Jesus.

CHAPTER III

JESUS' TEACHING OBJECTIVES, AND OURS

ONE of our greatest shortcomings as teachers is that we do not see far enough. Most of us have a teaching aim for each lesson. But we need as a unifying element a definite set of goals. What is it, in the long run, we want to accomplish? How can we make each lesson contribute toward these major objectives of our effort?

These questions are all-important. For it makes no difference how thoroughly trained and how well equipped we are for teaching, we are likely to fail unless we have a very clear conception of what we wish to bring to pass in the lives of our pupils.

Nature and Importance of Objectives

Before going further let us be sure that we understand what we mean by an objective in this discussion. Let us distinguish between objectives and aims. When a housewife starts work with a broom or a vacuum cleaner, her aim is to clean the floor of that room. But her objective is an orderly house, a more livable and lovable place in which to have a home for herself and her family. Every bit of housework has its own particular aim, but all these aims head up to the one objective, an orderly house, a livable and lovable home. Show me a

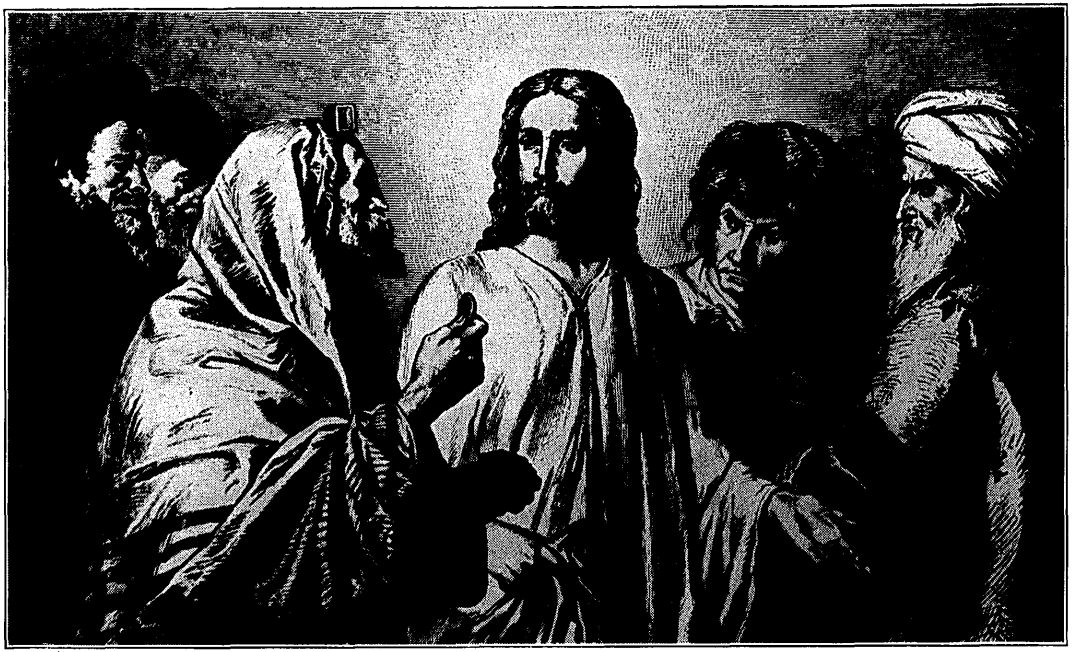
housewife without an objective and I will show you a drudge.

The objectives we choose have everything to do with our incentives for teaching, and much to do with our methods as well. A salesman calls to sell you a piece of merchandise. His aim is to make the sale. But what are his objectives: To make excessive profits for himself? To do his customers a service and give them value received? The salesman who is thinking only of profits will use any and all known tricks to persuade you to buy. The one whose objective is service will show you what his article can accomplish for you. He will not urge you to buy if he sees that his article really will not help you. Is it not clear that a salesman's objectives color his sales talk, determining to a large extent what he says and how he says it? It should be equally clear that a teacher's objectives largely determine the methods he will use.

To clear up the whole question of methods, and to unify our week-to-week work as teachers, we need to know what Jesus' objectives as a teacher really were. What he sought to accomplish in his pupils we should seek to accomplish in ours.

A Practice Test

Canon Charles E. Raven in his recent book, "Christ and Modern Education" (pages 140, 144, 179), separates between the earlier and later goals of Jesus as a teacher. He says that in the first



Bida **Tribute Money**

phase of Christ's ministry his main purposes were: "To expand and enrich their idea of God, to widen and deepen their sympathies with mankind, to liberate their fears, to remove obsessions, to break down barriers by revealing life in all its fullness, life in the blessed community, life as the Father wills it"; and further, "to kindle a passion for God, to make his righteousness attractive, to enlist in the joyous family of the Kingdom." Later, after Peter's confession, Canon Raven thinks Jesus' teaching objectives changed, or rather became intensified and narrowed down to that of helping them discover his true claim upon them as the Savior who was to suffer for the sins of mankind. As a practice test in distinguishing between specific aims and larger objectives, read carefully each phrase in the above quotations and decide for yourself which of them represent Jesus' true objectives —the things he wanted to accomplish in the lives of his followers—and which represent aims toward achieving these larger results. For instance, was Jesus concerned primarily about removing obsessions, or was this only an aim of some of the lessons he gave them, preparatory to reaching the larger goal of positive transformation he wished to work in their lives? Sometimes we have to remove misconceptions from the minds of our pupils, but do we regard this as an end in itself? If so, we shall probably go at it in a purely negative and argumentative manner. But if removing miscon-

ceptions is only one step toward the larger goal of helping them grasp the life-transforming truths of the Gospel, we will follow a more positive, patient, and sustained method.

If you wished to learn what Jesus' major teaching objectives were, how would you go about it? Obviously you would study the Gospels to discover any direct statements he made about his objectives, and also to see what inferences you could draw from his teachings, keeping clearly in mind all the while the difference between specific aims and ultimate goals. It would pay every teacher to do that for himself.

Discovering Jesus' Teaching Objectives

Below we shall give the results of our own study, listing the major objectives of Jesus as a teacher, and citing some of the Bible passages on which they are based:

1. *To lead his disciples to trust God completely, and love him as their Father.* This is inferred from his repeated teachings about God as a Father, and his many injunctions to his disciples to put their trust completely in God. Examples: The "Let not your heart be troubled" passage in John 14: 1, 2; the anti-worry passage of Matthew 6: 25-34; the first great commandment to love God with all one's being; and John 3: 16, "For God so loved the world." But it was not merely trust in God which was Jesus' objective here. He sought

to "kindle a passion for God" that would make for joyous enlistment in his service.

2. *To win them to active faith in himself as the Son of God.* Again, John 3: 16; Jesus' words to the woman of Samaria, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4: 26). That this was one of the great objectives of Jesus' teaching is shown by the importance he attached to Peter's confession (Matthew 16: 16), saying that upon that rock he would build his church.

3. *To teach the Christian way of life, in contrast to merely formal religion and worldly living.* This embraces the principles, ideals, thoughts, attitudes, and modes of conduct of the Christian life. The Sermon on the Mount is the great passage in proof of this as one of Jesus' major objectives as a teacher. In the Beatitudes he set forth the personal ideals of the Christian life, and in the passages following he drew contrasts between this way of life and that of a purely legalistic and formal faith. A further illustration is the parable of the two sons, (Matthew 21: 28-30), in which the emphasis is on loyalty of action in contrast to mere loyalty of profession.

4. *To prepare and train his disciples to be active workers, witnesses, and leaders in spreading this faith and this way of life throughout the world.* Jesus states this very directly in his first call to his disciples, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4: 19). That it was the climax

of all the other objectives of his teaching work is evident from his great commission, in which he gave final instructions to his disciples to go and teach all peoples (Matthew 28: 19). Jesus gave his disciples actual training by sending them out to teach and evangelize under his oversight.

Perhaps all these four objectives could be summed up comprehensively in a single sentence, as follows: To transform the lives of his disciples and through them to transform other lives and regenerate human society. The reader may think of other ways of summing them up that are even better. But by being too concise and brief in our statement we become less concrete. It is best to let these four objectives stand, and to ask, Can you find for yourself any other major objectives of Jesus in his teaching work which are not implied or included in these four?

How Jesus Held to His Objectives

One way to test these objectives is to go through all the main incidents of Jesus' teaching ministry and see how he bent everything toward these goals. He saw the flowers of the field and he greatly appreciated their beauty, but instead of giving a nature talk to develop the esthetic sense of his disciples, he made out of the beauty of the lilies a lesson of trust in God (see Objective 1, above). When the Pharisees, noticing that Jesus' disciples did not observe all the fasts, tried to argue with

him about it, he refused to discuss the merit of their fasts as such (Mark 2: 18-20), and made their question the occasion for pointing out that he was the "bridegroom," the Messiah (Objective 2). When a man in the crowd asked Jesus to settle a difficulty over an estate (Luke 12: 13-21), he refused to do so, but told the story of the rich fool, to draw the contrast between the worldly life of mere money-getting and the life that is rich toward God (Objective 3). When James and John asked for the chief places of honor and power, next to him, in his kingdom (Mark 10: 35-40), he promised them no glory, but made their request the occasion of teaching them once more that they must be prepared rather to suffer and endure as his witnesses (Objective 4).

Your own search of the four Gospels should yield other evidences of how Jesus held to his teaching objectives and bent every possible incident and occasion to the accomplishment of his main purposes as a teacher. Even many of his works of healing and other miracles were used as illustrations or proofs of the great truths and attitudes which he wished to plant and nurture in the lives of his disciples.

What About Teaching the Bible?

This little study of Jesus' teaching objectives raises many questions and suggests many comparisons with the current trends or fashions in religious

teaching. On the one hand there is the ultra-conservative teacher who, when asked the great purpose of her teaching, replies that she aims to teach the Bible. Her objective is to make her pupils acquainted with the inspired Word. Is this enough? The Pharisees knew their Bible almost by heart. Could our pupils know Bible facts thoroughly and still not have in them the life and the faith and the attitudes and habits of conduct which were parts of Jesus' fourfold objective?

What About Merely Cultural Teaching?

On the other hand, there is that group of teachers—a host of them we fear, far too many we are sure—whose objectives appear to be purely cultural. They would accept the first and third objectives, stated above, interpreting them as necessary goals for a spiritually cultivated life. They regard the second as unnecessary, and lead their pupils to the study of the life of Christ for its cultural values only. They dilute the fourth objective until it means nothing more than a mild good will and altruism. These teachers have really taken over the best goals of secular education and added a little moral or religious motivation to them. Their objectives as variously stated may be summed up thus: To teach the maintenance of health as a religious duty; to refine feeling and develop the esthetic sense, so that the pupil's life may be filled with art and joy; to train pupils in wor-

ship, so that they may have a spiritual philosophy of life; to teach the highest moral standards of conduct and character, and reverence for the rights of others, so as to make good citizens.

Summed up in a word, the objectives of a purely cultural religious education are the self-development and self-realization of the pupil, and the building of a society in which all people may enjoy the highest possible self-development. The only difference between this and the higher goals of secular education is that religious educators of this type recognize religion as necessary to the highest self-development, while secular educators often do not so recognize it. Can we say that programs and lesson courses built upon such objectives are Christian? Is religious education of this type Christian religious education? What has become of the great objectives of Jesus? The only way to measure anything that claims to be Christian is to measure it in terms of Christ. The only way to measure our objectives as Christian teachers is to compare them with the teaching objectives of Jesus.

If we are to succeed as teachers, we must not only adopt Jesus' objectives through our own individual study and discovery of them, but we must test our teaching aims in each lesson to be sure that they will help us in the attainment of these objectives.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT WAS JESUS' METHOD AS A TEACHER?

IN the preceding chapter we considered Jesus' objectives as a teacher. Few Sunday-school teachers today would challenge the statement that those same objectives should be ours. But there are those who claim that pedagogical science has advanced beyond Jesus, and that educators today know methods of teaching which are superior to any used in the past. We need not depend on Jesus' methods, they say, and hence need not inquire what they were. To say this is not only to deny to Jesus a wisdom equal to that of modern educators. It is to be guilty of a fallacy which reveals one as deficient in knowledge of correct educational procedure.

Methods depend upon objectives. The methods we should use as teachers are not properly determined by those used in the public school or elsewhere. They are determined by what we wish to accomplish. If we accept the objectives of Jesus, we must accept his methods as well, unless we can show that some educational leader today has succeeded in accomplishing Jesus' aims better than Jesus accomplished them. Dr. Luther A. Weigle could have made no simpler and no more profound

statement of the matter than when he said at the Toronto International Convention in June, 1930: "Education is Christian only as it relies on the motives and method of Jesus himself."

To think of Jesus as following a method seems incongruous. Let us say, then, that he did not follow a method, but he created one. And let us keep clearly in mind that we are talking here about Jesus' method, not about his technique. Jesus used many methods, or techniques of teaching, the chief of which will be discussed in later chapters. In fact, a study of the Gospels to discover all the devices Jesus used can be recommended as the best cure for any hobby rider who teaches all pupils and all lessons by a single technique. Jesus in his teaching made use of questions, life problems, thought-provoking epigrams, illustrations, stories or parables, Scripture exposition, projects, and practically every other device known to modern educators. But through all these there ran one method: *Jesus taught in terms of life.*

Jesus' Teaching Was Flexed to Fit Life

This, in fact, accounts for the wealth of devices he used, and the facility with which he adapted and modified them to suit the needs of the moment. This flexible quality of Jesus' teaching can be seen best in what superficially seems to be its least

flexible element, his parables. A parable is a parable, and we usually class all the parables together as examples of the same type of teaching. Yet Jesus used parables to accomplish widely differing purposes. When he spoke them to large crowds his purpose usually was to put a profound or important spiritual truth in simple symbolic language, and in the setting of everyday experience, so as to awaken spiritual perception. But when he addressed a parable to his critics, its purpose was that for which we generally employ argument; that is, to convince them of a truth which they were intent on opposing or dodging. In the one case, his parables were truths in story form; in the other they were teaching stratagems. In the one case, the parable was complete in itself; in the other, it led up to questions which his pupils or critics were asked to answer. First, there would be the simple question about the parable-story, which could be answered only as Jesus wished. Then would follow swiftly the application, which they could not avoid or deny after having committed themselves.

Always Jesus was intent first of all not upon methods, but upon objectives. He concentrated on what he wanted to accomplish in the minds or hearts of his hearers, and then he used the method best calculated to the purpose, flexing it to fit the person and the occasion.

Life-Situation Teaching

Jesus taught in terms of life because his objective was not to impart information merely, but to change and transform life. Most of his teaching grew directly out of life situations. When people tried to get him to talk about theoretical matters he pinned them down to something vital. When the lawyer came to him with a question about, "Who is my neighbor?" which the rabbis were accustomed to debate much on its purely theoretical side, Jesus at once gave him a common life-situation on the Jericho road, and asked him to answer his own question in terms of deeds, not theories. When the Samaritan woman at the well tried to draw Jesus into a discussion of the relative merits of two rival places of worship, the Master pinned the conversation down to her personal domestic life, and made her see that worship takes place in the spirit and the truth with which we live.

Even when uttering precepts, as in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had constantly in mind the struggles and sorrows, perplexities, worries, and ambitions of real people. That is why his precepts are not dry abstractions, but vivid pictures of life.

Jesus Did Not Dogmatize

Jesus was not teaching facts; he was teaching people to face facts. He was not teaching religion; he was teaching people to be religious. He

was not teaching intellectual assent to theological propositions; he was teaching people to experience God in their lives. That is why he dealt with life situations and constantly had in mind the practical needs of his pupils.

Canon Charles E. Raven has summed this up well in these words: " It is very notable that Jesus does not primarily give instruction about God; dogmas and creeds are not his method; rather he seeks to stimulate interest, to widen vision, to convey experience." (From " Christ and Modern Education," page 141.) Does this mean that Jesus never enunciated any doctrines? No, for he did. For instance, when Nicodemus came to him, he enunciated very clearly this doctrine: " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Other instances might be cited. But Jesus did not cast his doctrine in the form of dogma. He did not undertake to explain the new birth in theological terms. Even when speaking to Nicodemus, the theologian, he tried to make the truth vivid in terms of phenomena of experience. He compared spiritual regeneration to another birth; he made its mystery believable by comparing it to the mystery of the wind. He taught doctrine in terms of life.

Instead of developing learned arguments for the existence of God, as the theologians and philosophers have done, he spoke of God as a father. He explained his workings in the world by calling at-

tention to the results which people can see all about them—the lilies of the field, the rain and sunshine.

Jesus Taught by Enriching Experience

Truth for Jesus was not a set of facts and syllogisms, but rather a realm of living. When one enters that realm, he will continue, under divine guidance, to make new discoveries of truth throughout life (see John 16: 13). This is why Jesus taught by enriching the spiritual experience of his pupils, instead of by propagating orthodoxies and anathemas.

When the disciples of John the Baptist came, asking Jesus whether or not he was the Messiah, Jesus did not give them a dogmatic pronouncement. He enriched their experience by letting them hear his teachings and see his works. Then he told them to report to John what they had seen and heard. John was to decide for himself.

We want our pupils to believe in Christ as the Son of God, and trust him as their personal Savior, but are we trying to impose this belief by argument and indoctrination? Or are we trying to grow it by enriching the experience of our pupils with Christ? We must be sure that we introduce them to the historical Jesus, that we help them become so well acquainted with his life that they will see him as the supreme Hero, the great Teacher, and the real Person who walked on earth, and who

loved and sympathized with a heart of perfect understanding. When he is thus real to them they will be ready to make their decision on the basis of experience and fellowship with him as their Savior and Friend. To follow this method—is that not to teach as Jesus taught?

How Jesus Answered Life Questions

All this does not mean that Jesus failed to give positive and authoritative answers to life questions. But he brought his disciples first to the point of experience where they were ready for the answers. In fact, by all that he did and said, by the very challenge of his attitude, he led them to ask questions. We cannot imagine Jesus hunting up that rich young ruler to tell him what was the matter with his life. But when the young man, feeling a longing for something he did not possess, came to him with the problem, Jesus analyzed his situation for him and pointed out the next experiences he must pass through if he would enter the realm of the eternal life. Note that he did not discuss with the young man any plan of salvation in general terms, but talked concretely and directly to the needs of the individual who stood before him. He was concerned not with unfolding an idea, but with changing a life.

Nothing better illustrates how Jesus left to the morrow the truths for which his disciples were not ready today, and prepared them through experi-

ence, a step at a time, than his teaching concerning his coming death. For this he had to prepare their minds as fully as possible in advance, so that when the terrible experience came, they would understand it and their faith would not be overwhelmed. Jesus knew from the beginning that the disciples held views of his Messiahship which were badly tinged with the erroneous conceptions of the time. Yet he did not sit down with them at once and try to disabuse their minds of all error. He let them follow him and share his work until gradually their ideas changed. Then came hints of his coming death, then clearer allusions, and finally plain statements.

When we deal with error, the temptation is to deal sledge-hammer blows. A young man reports that he recently asked his teacher concerning a doubt which had long troubled him, and for answer the teacher said: "Whenever I find that anyone is harboring doubt, I quit talking right there." Many a teacher, on hearing an erroneous view expressed by a pupil, breaks out into dogmatic utterances and implied denunciations which stop spiritual growth, instead of leading that pupil into thoughtful consideration of the truth, and into experiences which will supplant the error with the truth.

The care with which Jesus prepared his disciples for the truth, and led them into it through vital methods, is only equaled by the resolution with which he withheld from them things for which they

were obviously unready and which only a deeper experience could reveal to them. Only the three who were prepared to sense the spiritual meaning of the transfiguration were permitted to see it. And strict silence was enjoined, lest an experience so sacred might come to the ears of people unready for it, who could not profit by it but might only be led into doubt or disbelief.

We come to the closing hours of Jesus' life. Soon he was to be crucified. How much there was yet for his disciples to know! But even then he refrained from giving them teaching for which only future experiences could prepare them. When he had told them all they could receive, he said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16: 12).

To Jesus the kingdom of God was not a collection of facts to be memorized, but a life of experience with God, with the Holy Spirit, with Christ himself. He knew that it must come to the individual as an ever-increasing growth, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." And so through all the external means by which he taught, his one method was to lead his disciples into experience with the truth. We must all surely agree that Jesus' method "provides a complete answer to the demands of modern educational science, and incidentally, a striking contrast to the traditional type of teaching." How can we fail to see that his method is the one which we must strive



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to use, rather than any modern educational theory or any traditional method of the past?

CHAPTER V

JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS BIBLE

WHAT kind of Bible did Jesus have? To what extent did he use it? What was his attitude toward the Scriptures and his belief concerning them? If Jesus were teaching today, do you think he would regard it as important to know his Bible thoroughly? These are some of the questions which are now before us.

As everyone will realize, the New Testament was not written during Jesus' ministry. The Bible which Jesus used consisted of the Jewish Scriptures. The books were not in the same order in which we find them in our Old Testament today. Sometimes the Jews called their Scriptures "The Law," but sometimes they used this term to include only the books of Moses, and referred to their Scriptures as a whole as "The Law and the Prophets." In reality the Jewish Bible had three parts, the Law, the Prophets, and the Kethubim or other Sacred Writings. The Kethubim in Jesus' day probably included Ecclesiasticus and one or two other books now classed as Apocryphal.

A question at once suggests itself: Did Jesus himself accept all the Scriptures which the Jews accepted? The only way we can answer this is by studying the Scripture quotations and allusions

which we find in the Gospels. We discover that he quoted from all three divisions of the Jewish Scriptures—the Law, the Prophets, and the Sacred Writings. As recorded in the Gospels, he made thirty-eight express quotations from Scripture, not counting any occasions twice, and fourteen or more direct allusions to some Scripture event. In addition there are about fifty instances in which Jesus used Scripture language or in which his language so closely parallels the words of some Old Testament passage that he must have had that passage in mind. This gives a total of at least one hundred instances, from twenty-one of the thirty-nine books of our Old Testament. These include all the books of the Pentateuch, 1 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi. Since the twelve minor prophets were regarded as one book, we are sure that Jesus, quoting from some of them, recognized all of them. Since 1 and 2 Samuel were regarded as one book, in quoting from 1 Samuel he also recognized 2 Samuel.

This leaves only nine books, according to the Jewish arrangement of the Scriptures, which there is no record that Jesus used during his ministry. We must remember that the Gospels record only a small portion of Jesus' total ministry. (See John 21: 25.) Scholars estimate that all of the action recorded in the Gospels occurred on thirty-five dif-

ferent days. If all the sayings of Jesus were recorded, we might find that he quoted from and recognized every book of our Old Testament.

There are no direct quotations, so far as the Gospel records go, from any of the books now called Apocryphal, but there are a few instances in which Christ's language reminds us of certain passages in some of the Apocryphal books, showing that he was probably familiar with them.

Jesus' Choice of Scripture Passages

Would you like to know to what Old Testament incidents and stories Jesus alluded? Here is a partial list. See if you can complete it from your own study of the Gospels:

Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (Luke 4: 26).

Elisha and Naaman (Luke 4: 27).

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Matthew 12: 42).

Jonah's preaching at Nineveh (Matthew 12: 41).

Noah and the Ark (Luke 17: 27).

Lot and the destruction of Sodom (Luke 17: 29, 32).

David eating the shewbread on the Sabbath day (Matthew 12: 3, 4).

It may seem strange that some of the most popular Bible stories of today are not mentioned anywhere in the teachings of Jesus. Could you account

for this partly on the ground that Jesus was not teaching the Bible as such but using the Old Testament Scriptures to lead the Jewish people to faith in himself? Judged by recorded usage alone, Jesus' favorite books were the Psalms and Isaiah.

This leads to the question: For what specific purposes did Jesus quote Scripture? Did he ever use his Bible for personal help? At once you will think of his struggle with the Tempter, when he quoted three times from the book of Deuteronomy. Jesus used Scripture also to answer the criticisms of the scribes and Pharisees. Could he have chosen any more effective weapon to deal with these people, who prided themselves on being authorities in the Scriptures?

Most of Jesus' quotations of prophecy were concerning himself and his deeds. What prophecy did he quote concerning Judas? (John 13: 18.) What prophecy did he say John the Baptist had fulfilled? (Matthew 11: 10.) On what occasion or occasions did he quote a prophecy concerning the attitude of people toward him and his teachings? (Matthew 13: 14, 15, also 15: 8, 9.)

How Jesus Regarded the Scriptures

These instances seem to show that Jesus regarded the Scriptures as authoritative. But did he ever teach, in so many words, the authority of Scripture? Consider Matthew 5: 18: "One jot

or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Why is it, then, that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus six separate times quotes an Old Testament law and then proceeds to amend it? (See Matthew 5: 21, 22; 27, 28; 31, 32; 33, 34; 38, 39; 43, 44.) Is it not evident that while he regarded the Old Testament Scriptures as authoritative, he did not regard them as final? They were to be fulfilled to the last jot and tittle in the sense that he was to fulfill them in his own person and teachings. He fulfilled Old Testament commandments by giving them a spiritual rebirth through his own teachings. Are we, then, to regard the Old Testament as of equal value with the New Testament for teaching purposes? What does Jesus' clear attitude in this respect indicate as to the proper use of the Old Testament in teaching? The inference is inevitable that its law and commandments are everywhere to be interpreted in the light of Jesus' own teaching, for this is precisely what he himself did in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus' Freedom in the Use of Scripture

When Jesus quoted Scripture he was not always careful to quote it verbatim, but was often satisfied to give the gist of its meaning. Many students of the Bible are sincerely puzzled when they come across a quotation from the Old Testament on the lips of Jesus; then, turning to the Old Testament, find that the words are not quoted with exactness.

Some of these misquotations are only apparent. For example, when Jesus was making his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the chief priests and scribes were indignant because he permitted the crowds to sing hosannas to him as the Son of David. In their ears this was blasphemy. When they demanded whether he did not hear what was being said, he quoted from Psalm 8: 2: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." In our King James Version, however, this verse in the Psalms reads: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." The explanation is to be found in the fact that Jesus was quoting from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Scriptures current in his day; whereas our King James Version is translated from ancient Hebrew manuscripts. We should expect Jesus to quote Scripture with exactness when talking with his critics, who knew the Scriptures by heart, and we find that in every recorded instance he did so.

However, there were numerous occasions when Jesus paraphrased the Scripture or gave a free rendering of it. In Matthew 5: 31 he quotes as follows: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement." This is a condensation of Deuteronomy 24: 1. In Matthew 5: 33 he quoted: "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." This is a paraphrase or free rendering of Deuteronomy

23: 23. Jesus often took phrases and clauses from Scripture, inserting them in his own teachings. His use of Old Testament imagery is that of one who knew the Scriptures so thoroughly that thoughts from all parts of them flocked to his mind whenever he undertook to speak at length on any subject.

A Few Pertinent Questions

This study leads to a number of questions which would be worth discussing by any group of teachers: Why is it that so many people today insist upon the very words of Scripture in the King James Version, when over and over again Jesus used the Scriptures freely, giving only the gist and meaning? His mind was saturated in the Scriptures, and he could have quoted every word verbatim if he had thought it important to do so. Is there such a thing as putting so much emphasis on exact verbal quotation that one loses the living power of Scripture?

Another question which might be raised in passing is this: If the King James Version differs in some respects from the Greek translation (Septuagint) which Jesus used, why should some of us be so fearful about using other translations of the Bible made by evangelical Bible scholars, which throw light on its meaning? Did the British scholars who translated the Bible into the Authorized or King James Version possess any more authority

than the American scholars who translated the Revised Version, for instance? It is certain they did not have access to as many ancient manuscripts. These questions are raised in passing to create thought.

If we as teachers knew our Old Testament so well that we would recognize at once the allusions to it in the teachings of Jesus, would it not help us considerably to understand some of the passages which otherwise seem vague? For instance, there is that troublesome passage in John 1: 51, in which Jesus tells his first disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." If we recognize at once that Jesus is using the imagery of Jacob's dream, when in his sleep he saw the ladder set up to heaven and the angels ascending and descending upon it, what a difference this will make in our understanding of the passage.

In view of the fact that Scripture was almost constantly in the mind of Jesus and on his lips, how important do you think it is for the Sunday-school teacher today to know the Bible? What do you think of the statement recently made that "there are many Sunday-school teachers today who know a little modern pedagogy and a great many ethical stories from modern literature, but practically nothing about the Bible"? Is that overdrawn?

CHAPTER VI

JESUS' USE OF THE SCRIPTURES IN TEACHING

MUCH has been said in late years about the need of life-centered teaching, and much that has been said has assumed erroneously that if you teach the Bible your teaching must be material-centered—cannot be life-centered. Conversely it is widely assumed that if you center your teaching in the life interests and experiences of your pupils, the Bible can be used at best only as tail-end reference material. Yet, strangely, we call it the Book of Life. Now what do we mean by that? Do we mean only that it shows us the way to eternal life? Does it not give us also the best portrayals of human feelings, human problems, human needs to be found anywhere? Does it not show us both life as it is and life as it should be? Is it not, then, the Book of Life in the sense that it reveals life to us in its actualities and idealities?

In a Sunday-school lesson about Saul, for young folks, a lesson writer substituted for a portion of the story of Saul's career a paragraph about Commander Byrd and his South Polar exploits. He called the story about Byrd life-centered and the story about Saul Bible-centered or material-centered. Do you think this was an erroneous or a

correct distinction? In the one case he was talking about a dead hero; in the other case about a live one. But in both cases he had to make his hero real to his pupils in order to make a life-centered appeal. It was a bit easier to do with Byrd than with Saul, but otherwise what was the difference in the material?

To assume that Bible teaching must be material-centered, while if we talk about heroes of today our teaching is necessarily life-centered, is not to think straight. It is not the material we use but the way we use it that determines whether we really meet the life needs of our pupils or not. Anything that actually reaches their life needs is life-centered. Let us see whether or not Jesus' use of the Scriptures was of this kind.

How Jesus Expounded Scripture

When Jesus returned to Nazareth from his early Judean ministry he attended synagogue services on the Sabbath and "began to teach" the people. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the incident, but only Luke (4: 16-30) tells us how he taught. First he read Isaiah 61: 1, 2 and then commented briefly on it. Note that the comment was not expository in the ordinary sense. It was an up-to-the-minute application. He told the people that these words were that very day fulfilled in their midst. The greatest hope of the Jews was that the Messiah would come soon. Naturally in the at-

mosphere of worship, the minds of all devout Jews would be diverted from their daily cares to this great hope. What could have been more life-centered than to appeal by a Bible passage to the greatest interest your hearers have in life at the moment—the interest which is probably on their hearts at the very moment you are speaking?

Suppose, if you can, that Jesus had appealed to the synagogue folk that day on the basis of their business interests. Would such a talk have been more life-centered than the talk he gave, or less so?

How absurd it is to suppose that if one talks straight religion with his pupils that is not life-centered teaching, but if he talks baseball or discusses clothes, manners, and "dates," with some moralizings developed out of the ensuing discussion, his teaching is very life-centered. This makes the fringe of life more important than the heart of life. Whenever we use the Bible in such a way as to meet the consciously felt moral and spiritual needs of our pupils our teaching is as deeply life-centered as it is possible for any teaching to be.

The most outstanding instance of Jesus expounding the Scriptures occurred on the way to Emmaus on the first Easter day (Luke 24: 13-27). Those two disciples were sorrowful and disappointed. They were deeply puzzled at the apparently disastrous outcome of all their hopes. Notice how Jesus drew from them in conversation the problem of grief and disillusionment with which they were

struggling. Then he reasoned with them on the basis of Scripture, expounding its meaning to them at length. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Certainly this was Bible teaching if there ever was such teaching. Jesus was explaining the Bible, opening up its meaning. But was it Bible-centered? Not at all. For it was aimed directly at the greatest need those two disciples felt at that very hour.

Are we not beginning to see that it is possible to teach the Bible and still aim our teaching directly at the greatest life needs of our pupils? We should also see that life-centered and Bible-centered teaching are not such mutually exclusive terms as some people suppose. At least there is no such great gulf fixed between these two forms of teaching as some present-day leaders in religious education assume in their learned dissertations.

We must put equal emphasis, then, upon two facts which are not contradictory but correlative in Jesus' method, as illustrated above. He taught Scripture directly by the expository method and used the Scripture as authority, and yet he taught for the specific purpose of applying the meaning of Scripture to some real life question, problem, or need of those whom he addressed. Can you find further illustrations of this twofold method of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels?

Teaching by Suggestion

The greater body of Jesus' teaching is contained in the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, and the teachings about the last days found in Matthew 24 and 25, with parallels in Mark and Luke. We are accustomed to think of all of these as original teachings of Jesus, and yet they are drenched with Old Testament phrases, allusions, and imagery.

Jesus' greatest freedom from Scripture imagery, if we may so characterize it, is found in the parables. Would you be surprised to find that even some of these are rooted in the Old Testament? Compare the phrase in Joel 3: 13, "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe," with the words, "he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" at the close of the parable of the blade and the ear in Mark 4: 26-29. Again, compare the description of the great size to which the mustard seed grew with the tree of Daniel 4: 12-21, "upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation." Are such resemblances only accidental, or did these passages suggest the imagery of the two parables?

More striking is the parallel between Jesus' parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matthew 21: 33-41) and the parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5: 1, 2. Jesus' parable begins: "There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower." Isaiah begins his parable, "My

wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein." Moreover, there is a striking parallel in the teaching of these two parables. Is this a pure accident, or was Jesus probably reminding his readers of the famous passage in Isaiah to reinforce the imagery of his own words?

To the Jewish mind these close parallels would naturally suggest the Old Testament passages and bring to Jesus' teachings the richness of all the past religious associations gathered about their Scriptures in the minds of his hearers.

A more powerful method of using the Scripture to teach by suggestion will be found in some of the Beatitudes. In particular, note this parallel:

Matthew 5: 4: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

Isaiah 61: 1, 2: ". . . the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek . . to comfort all that mourn."

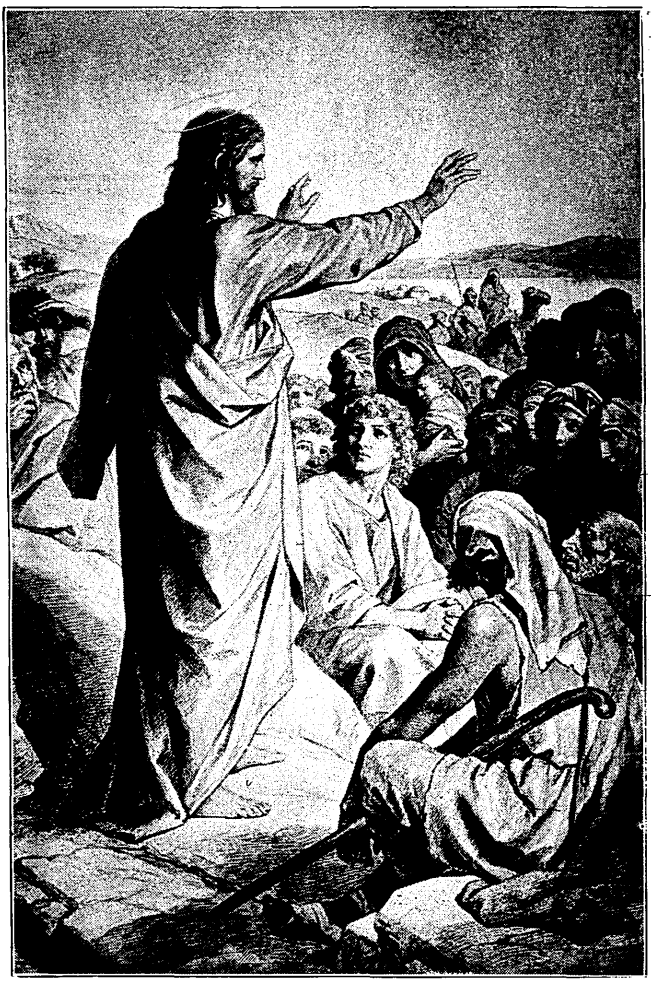
This passage in Isaiah was a clearly recognized prophecy of the work of the Messiah. In suggesting it in the Beatitude, Jesus was also suggesting to the minds of his hearers that he had come to fulfill it.

Everyone knows, who has made a thorough study of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew, that Christ's forecast of the end

of the age and the last judgment is rich with quotations from and allusions to Old Testament prophetic and apocalyptic utterances. In fact, the whole passage is so interspersed with these quotations, on which Jesus elaborates in his own words, that this entire section of the Gospel is like a mosaic. In this discourse Jesus quotes or alludes to passages found in seven different books: Genesis, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos and Zechariah; and Mark's report also includes a quotation from Micah.

Shall we say that Jesus was here teaching the Bible directly? Rather, he was using the Old Testament prophets, their words and imagery, because of their power of suggestion.

Why is it that the best modern writers use Scripture allusions so freely, and that even men like Meredith Nicholson, who write fantastic tales, confess that they have saturated themselves in Biblical language? Is it not because they realize the power of the Bible, through its trueness to life, to win a wonderful hold upon the imaginations of men and to stir the heart by the aptness of its imagery? The Scriptures are full of verbal rapiers which every teacher should be able to use with the skill of a swordsman. What shall be said for the teacher who does not know Scripture well enough to use its powerful phrases in telling metaphors and heart-stirring appeals? He is like a soldier who goes into battle leaving his best weapon behind.



Hofmann **Sermon on the Mount**

Do We Teach the Bible?

In closing this study, let us ask one more question: Do we find that Jesus taught the Scriptures and illustrated them from life, as so many teachers do today; or did he teach life and illustrate it from the Scriptures? There can be only one possible answer to this. Jesus taught the way of life. That was his great concern. He did not assume that by explaining Scripture people would learn to live the Christian life automatically.

Let no teacher say that it is his job to teach the Bible. Instead, it is our task to teach Christ and his way of life. You can teach the Bible without ever teaching your pupils the way of Jesus, but you cannot teach Christ without also teaching the heart of the Bible. This is only a difference of emphasis, but it is all important. A wrong emphasis here is often the cause of mistaken attitudes absorbed by our pupils. With all his use of the Bible Jesus was not a bibliolater. He did not say the Bible is the way, the truth, and the life; but, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

CHAPTER VII

THE QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

NOT long ago a teacher wrote to the editors of a young people's quarterly objecting to the printing of questions for discussion in connection with the lesson. She said, in effect: "The teacher's business is to instruct the pupils and tell them what the Bible teaches, not to ask their opinions about anything." This represents a rather widespread viewpoint, the obvious answer to which is: If questions have no place in teaching, why did Jesus ask so many questions and use questions for so many different purposes in his teaching?

The Question as a Point of Contact

If anyone had a right to speak with authority on religion, Jesus did. If anyone had a right to teach solely by the method of dogmatic instruction, he did. But that is not how he taught. Even the most casual reader of the Gospels cannot help noticing the great number of startling, unusual, unexpected questions which Jesus asked in conversation with others. More than one hundred such questions are to be found, and practically all of them served some teaching purpose. See if you can find in the Gospels any major instance of

Jesus' teaching in which he did not ask one or more questions.

One of the most elementary uses of the question is as a point of contact or method of opening a line of thought. Many times Jesus used questions for this purpose. Among the most familiar instances is the one found in Matthew 18: 12: "How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?" This is really a combination of question and illustration. Other instances of the question as a point of contact stand out on almost every page of the Gospels, and any Bible reader can easily study them for himself.

Rhetorical Questions

A member of an adult class, commenting on the effective work of his teacher, said: "When he is talking he keeps asking us questions, but without giving us time to answer." What good teacher does not do this frequently? Such questions are usually called rhetorical—they are asked for effect rather than for reply. But their real purpose is to hold attention and arouse thought. If they carry surprise or challenge they stir up mental activity. Jesus' teachings are full of rhetorical questions, and a little study of them is very revealing. Sometimes by such a device he invites his

hearers to try to think out a subject with him, as when in Luke 13: 18 he asks: "Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?" This is a deliberative question, putting the listener at once into a thoughtful and anticipatory frame of mind. Think how much more effective this was than if Jesus had said, "Now I want to talk to you a few minutes about the kingdom of God." That would have been an invitation to go to sleep.

Sometimes Jesus used the rhetorical question as a method of reasoning, by means of which to compel his pupils to see the self-evidence of the truth he wished them to grasp. A well-known instance is this, from Matthew 6: 30: "If God so clothe the grass of the field . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Note also Matthew 6: 27: "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" And here is another from Luke 6: 39: "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" Luke calls this last question a parable. Close your eyes now and let your imagination picture the scene which it conjures up. Then let your thoughts follow as they will, without any attempt to control them or to reason things out. You will be surprised at the amazing way in which this question makes you apply Jesus' parable to yourself and to people you know, just as the disciples must have applied it to the Pharisees and other poorly qualified lead-

ers of their day. Do you understand now how much a well put rhetorical question can teach your class? Questions of this kind stick in the mind and go on giving birth to fresh thought for days and weeks to come.

The instances cited above also illustrate how a rhetorical question may be used to drive home a great truth. In trying to convince one of the folly of giving his life up to the accumulation of wealth, which would be more effective: to argue about it, giving a multitude of reasons, or to ask a single striking question? This is what Jesus did when he said: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Teachers sometimes lose their effectiveness by the verbosity with which they explain and expound, when they should throw the responsibility for thinking inescapably upon their pupils.

Questions That Compel Thought

This tendency to expound, explain, and in other ways to hold the floor, is especially strong when we know that the truth we wish to present is likely to be doubted or opposed. A good antidote is the study of Jesus' method with the Pharisees. Almost invariably he told a story or parable, following it by a question. In answering the question his opponents practically admitted the truth which he wished them to see. Take, for example, the case of the lawyer, who was probably inclined to get

into a debate with Jesus when he raised the question about who is my neighbor. Jesus told him the story of the Good Samaritan, and then asked him which of the three persons had been a true neighbor. The answer ended all argument. Additional instances for study are the questions following the parables of the two sons (Matthew 21: 28-32) and the wicked husbandmen (Matthew 21: 33-41).

Questions That Answer Questions

A good teacher provokes questions from his pupils. Find a class that is always asking the teacher questions, and you have found a teacher who knows how to awaken minds in the search for truth. This was eminently true of Jesus, and it is worth noting how often he answered a question with another question, throwing the responsibility for thought back upon his pupils or critics. When the chief priests and elders asked Jesus by what authority he taught and healed, he agreed to answer them if they could answer his question as to whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men (Matthew 21: 23-27). By this counter-question Jesus put his critics in a dilemma, it is true. But a correct answer to his question would have led them to a correct answer to their own. For if John's baptism was from heaven John was a true prophet, and it followed that Jesus was all that John had declared him to be.

A clearer example of Jesus' method in this re-

spect is found in Matthew 15: 1-9. His disciples were not always careful to observe the outward forms of Jewish ceremonialism. When the Pharisees observed them eating without having first ceremonially cleansed themselves, they asked Jesus why his followers transgressed the tradition of the elders. For answer Jesus asked them why they transgressed the commandment of God. His question answered theirs, for righteousness does not consist in outward observances of religious custom, but in genuine observance of divine commandments. Then he went further and explained how man-made religious traditions sometimes directly violate God's law.

"I rarely answer any question my pupils ask me," said a teacher, "if I can get them to find out or to think it out for themselves." "Oh," replied another teacher, "I always answer their questions. If I didn't, I should be afraid they would think I did not know the answer." In the light of Jesus' method, which tactics are more nearly right? Just what is the value of a question in answering another question? Should one stop with asking a counterquestion, or go on to help the pupils think out the answer?

Requests for Information

Jesus sometimes asked questions to secure information, as when he asked the father of the boy stricken with a dumb spirit how long his son had

been afflicted (Mark 9: 21). But usually the facts elicited were not for his information. They were data from which he wished his disciples to reason. Or, they led to points he wished to bring out so as to clarify the situation. Not long after the feeding of the four thousand, Jesus warned his disciples to beware the leaven of the Pharisees (Mark 8: 15). They missed the point and thought he was talking about bread. Why did he ask them how many baskets of fragments they had gathered after the five thousand were fed, and again how many after the feeding of the four thousand? When James and John sought the chief places at his side when he should come into his kingdom, it was evident they cherished a very erroneous notion of what was ahead for Jesus. He might have sat down and tried to explain fully to them. But how much more effective was his question: "Can ye drink the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" In an instant he cleared their minds of error, and at the same time suggested the hazard of anguish and suffering that his followers must be prepared to endure. Could more have been said in ten sentences of explanation than in this question?

Questions That Create Conviction

The suggestive power of questions to remind our pupils of facts and help them to reason from facts to truth is strikingly illustrated in Jesus'

comments on the work of John the Baptist (Matthew 11: 7-9). Suppose Jesus had said to the multitudes: "John the Baptist was a man of sturdy, unbending character, who refused to compromise with wrong." How much weaker that would have been than the question which suggested all this and much more: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" Study this entire passage and see how Jesus led his audience a step at a time, by means of questions, until they were ready to acclaim his conviction that John was a prophet of the first magnitude. Then, see how skillfully he built upon this foundation the truth that with John the old era of prophecy passed and the new era of Christ's kingdom began. Do you think Jesus could have led up to this great teaching as quickly and powerfully, or carried his hearers with him as whole-heartedly, in any other way than by winning them first with his questions?

A good question may be used as a sharp sword to pierce a callous conscience. Though simply stated and quietly asked it may carry with it a far more powerful emotional appeal than a sustained exhortation of even the most fervent type. When Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath day, he struck at the consciences of his critics when he asked, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil? to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3: 4.) Compare a similar instance in Luke 13: 14-17, in which we are told that after Jesus asked

his questions "his adversaries were ashamed." He had smitten their consciences with a query.

Questions That Strengthen Faith

One day Jesus was at the pool of Bethesda and saw there a man who had been afflicted for thirty-eight years, waiting in vain for an opportunity to bathe in the pool in the hope that he would be healed. Jesus approached him and asked a simple question: "Wilt thou be made whole?" If we had been standing by we might have said, "What an unnecessary question. Doesn't Jesus know why the man is here? Can't he see that the man is anxious to get into the pool?" But Jesus' question was to arouse the man's hope and to put him into a mood of faith so that he might be healed.

We have already seen in a previous article how Jesus' questions to the disciples led to Peter's great confession (Matthew 16: 16); in other words, brought to expression and so strengthened their faith in him. On another occasion, little quoted, two blind men came to Jesus begging him to have mercy on them. Before he healed them he asked, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Do you think this was merely an idle question? Did Jesus need the information? Why should he have asked such a question if not to lead them to express and so strengthen their faith in him? When Lazarus had died and Jesus was talking to Martha, who had

come to meet him, he changed her idea that it was too late to help Lazarus by his statement, "I am the resurrection and the life," followed by a question, "Believest thou this?" Up to this moment, so far as we know, Martha had never understood fully that Jesus was the Son of God in the sense in which he wished her now to believe it. This question made her faith all at once crystal clear.

What Good Questions Can Accomplish

We have gone into this phase of Jesus' use of the question in teaching because it is our profound conviction that most teachers would gain far better spiritual results if they would learn to bring to expression by questions, from time to time, the truest and best belief to which their pupils have attained. If a pupil's faith is never brought to expression it never bears fruit. It is important that we should have our pupils acknowledge the most that they believe before we ask them for definite decisions for Christ.

Would it be helpful to sum this all up briefly? We have found that Jesus used questions to:

1. Make a point of contact.
2. Hold attention and start thinking.
3. Clarify facts and clear up errors.
4. Compel his hearers to think through correctly to their own conclusions.
5. Make his questioners answer their own questions.

6. Intensify right convictions.
7. Prepare his hearers for understanding and accepting a truth he was about to utter.
8. Appeal to conscience.
9. Bring faith to expression and obtain confessions of faith in himself.

Can you add anything to this list from your own further study of Jesus' use of questions in teaching? For instance, you will find that in quoting Scripture authority for his words and acts he usually put the quotation in the form of a question. Why do you suppose he did this?

We have studied rather sketchily some types of the questions Jesus asked with a view to discovering their purpose and function. We might now begin over, if there were time, and ask ourselves what kind of questions he asked. Did Jesus ever ask theoretical questions? See if you can find any that were not practical and to the point. Were Jesus' questions general, or were they definite and searching? What good does a general question ever accomplish?

Would you say that Jesus' questions, in the words in which he spoke them, could be put to our pupils today? Or, was the wording of his query usually so adapted to the place, people, and occasion that it could not be used under other conditions? In other words, we find that Jesus' questions usually grew directly out of a concrete situation. If you ask why, the reason will be found in

an earlier chapter, in which we learned that Jesus always taught in terms of life. The most vital questions are of that kind. The best teaching questions grow out of class happenings and experiences, and out of the interaction of minds during the class discussion. Printed problems which are used in class should stimulate other questions more close to the lives of the pupils and arising spontaneously out of their needs and experiences.

Dr. Herman Harrell Horne in his book, "Jesus, the Master Teacher," suggests that an interrogation mark would be a good badge of the teaching profession. And Francis Bacon said that "The skillful question is the half of knowledge." Let us remind ourselves that the nine points listed above not only tell us the purposes behind some of the questions of Jesus; they indicate some of the things which good questions can accomplish. Before closing our minds to this matter, therefore, it might be well if each of us would check this list against our own classroom habits, and determine in how many ways and to what extent we are using questions as a factor in our work. Here is a most powerful instrument of teaching. Are we making the most of it?

CHAPTER VIII

HOW JESUS USED PROBLEMS AND LIFE SITUATIONS

BECAUSE the Christian religion is a way of life governed by faith, the one thing fatal to religious education in the Christian sense would be its withdrawal from life. The one thing most needful, after seeing that religious education is really Christian, is that it should plunge into life.

The paraphernalia of the older religious education consisted chiefly of catechisms and memory verses for the young, and the exposition of fine points of Scriptural geography, history, and theology in the abstract for the old. It was so concerned with these matters that sometimes it forgot life. Some of the newer religious education, however, has swung to the opposite extreme. The leaders conceive its functions to be that of creating a " fellowship of discovery and experiment," in which they expect the pupil to start with nothing and build a religious faith solely from his everyday experiences and the interpretation of their meaning. This is like putting a child on a boat in the middle of the Atlantic and asking him, without chart, compass or pilot, to find his way to port.

It is our business as teachers to see that our pupils learn the great truths of the Christian re-

ligion, but we must see that they learn them in terms of life. They are to know how to live the Christian life actually, not just how it should be lived theoretically. To obtain a pilot's license it isn't enough for one to know how airplanes are flown, one must learn to fly them. We want our pupils to qualify for pilot's licenses in Christian living. The incidents of daily life are the testing grounds for proving the truth by seeing how it works and by working it. A religious education which dodges, ignores, or slurs over any of the major facts and experiences of life is the kind which trains future backsliders and skeptics.

In Jesus' training of his disciples he put them up against the actual facts of life. They tramped all over Palestine with him. They were immersed in crowds of afflicted sufferers. They became acquainted with the sneers of skeptics as well as with the simple trust of little children. They learned the spiritual meaning of the problems of people who worked for a living. They shared life with a Master who was so close to what was going on about him that he knew the games which children played in the streets (Luke 7: 31-35), and the price at which sparrows were sold in the marketplace (Matthew 10: 29).

Today we have what is called the problem method and the life situation method of teaching. Some people regard these as newfangled, but they are at least as old as Jesus. Even though they

were "new" twenty years ago, Jesus used them 1900 years ago. How could we expect that one who knew life and people as he knew them would teach otherwise than by the use of life problems and life situations? When he said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly," do you think he meant only life in some pearly-gated heaven?

The Kind of Problems Jesus Used

We are not to think that the problems Jesus discussed are all recorded in the Gospels. John says (John 21: 25) that probably the world itself would not contain all the books which would be required to record the complete story of Jesus' life, so we are justified in thinking that the questions which people brought to Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, are only a few of the many, serving to indicate the range and power of his work in helping people to solve their problems. See if you can find any instances in which Jesus refused to help anyone who sincerely sought his counsel in any perplexity of life.

Here is a partial list, illustrating the kind of problems which people brought to Jesus and which he discussed with them or helped them solve:

How long shall we keep on forgiving people who sin repeatedly against us? Matthew 18: 21-35.

What are the proper grounds for divorce? Matthew 19: 3-12.



Siemiradzki **Christ With Mary and Martha**

What must one do to have eternal life? Matthew 19: 16-22.

Who is my neighbor? Luke 10: 29.

What kind of ambition is it right for a person to have? Matthew 20: 25-28.

What should be our attitude toward other workers who may seem to be our rivals? Mark 9: 38.

Where should one worship? John 4: 20-25.

Is it right to pay taxes? Luke 20: 21-25.

As you read each of these problems decide how you would classify it. Are any of them purely social questions? Are any concerned solely with matters of personal morality? How many of them would you call theoretical, having no direct relationship to daily life?

All Human Problems Are Religious Problems

Jesus did not confine himself to religious problems in the narrower sense of the word. He recognized that everything that has to do with life has to do with religion. He dealt with social and even with economic and political problems that were brought to him, but always from the point of view of moral and spiritual welfare. For instance, when his critics raised that question about tribute to Cæsar, they were propounding what appeared to be a purely political or patriotic question. Jesus' method of answering was characteristic. He had a coin brought to him, called attention to the image

and superscription, and asked whose it was. The answer that it was Cæsar's, meant that the Jews were accepting and using the coin of the Roman government and thereby were benefiting from the government's highly organized mediums of trade and commerce. Therefore Jesus answered the question first on the side of human justice, and his answer was: Give to Cæsar what belongs to him. Help pay for the benefits which you accept. But Jesus then drew the spiritual parallel. We also enjoy the blessings which God provides in life. It is right that we should make a return to him for what he does for us.

The Three Steps in Problem Teaching

Study, also, the methods which Jesus used with the lawyer who came with the question about eternal life and then asked, "Who is my neighbour?" As in the previous instance, Jesus began by throwing the question back at the questioner. He drew out the best that the lawyer could give him, then proceeded with his own further comment. But when Jesus had answered the question he was not through. To answer a question is not to solve a problem—that comes with action. Just as he told the tax-protesting patriots to pay Cæsar his due and pay their debts to God, so to the lawyer Jesus said, "Go and do thou likewise." Our greatest teachers of pedagogy today point out that problem teaching has three steps: (1) A clear statement of

the problem and understanding of what it involves; (2) thinking through to the right solution; (3) appropriate action, putting the solution into effect. These were the steps which Jesus followed in his teaching. Our greatest educators have only discovered what Jesus knew and practiced.

Problems Discussed in the Sermon on the Mount

In Jesus' day, and in ours, people are held down by many difficulties which they only vaguely recognize as problems. This is especially true of underlying attitudes and habits, which grow up in one's thought and conduct gradually. They are the most deeply rooted problems of the human race. Jesus saw what was going on inside people. He made them conscious of problems they had never realized before or had only vaguely sensed. The Sermon on the Mount is a series of discussions of some of the most vital, practical problems of this kind. Without trying to make an exhaustive analysis, let us jot down some of them here:

The habit of worry.
The right attitude toward money.
The control of passion: anger, lust.
The evil tendency to retaliate.
How to pray.
How to hold just opinions of others; judging others.
How to build life on a firm foundation.

What to do when you have a grievance against some one.

Note that in all these matters most people blunder away without any serious attempt to understand themselves and their feelings. Note, too, that all these matters concern underlying attitudes which create problems in daily conduct. People were not nearly so likely to come to Jesus with such a question as, "How can I keep from judging others harshly?" or, "How can I control my thoughts?" as they were to ask him something of more immediate and tangible concern; and we shall find this equally true in our experience as teachers. The question is, how to discover these hidden problems in the lives of our pupils and bring them to the surface.

Discovering Hidden Problems

We may imagine Jesus as he faced his audience on the mountainside. Do you not suppose, with his wonderful insight, he could read the worry in the faces of some of them, see the smoldering passions in the eyes of others? Of course, we may dismiss it all by saying that Jesus knew human nature. We cannot hope to have the perfect insight of Jesus, but it is a part of our job as teachers to keep watch of the underlying trends in the lives of our pupils, and to help them face life problems of which they may be only partly conscious.

Most of us are not nearly as skilful in this as

we might become if we made of it a serious business. Charlatans and mountebanks know more about human nature, as a rule, than Sunday-school teachers do. If a charlatan by keen observation can guess correctly at a great many things in our lives upon seeing us once for a little while, and with only the aid of some quick, shrewd work on the part of a hidden assistant, isn't it possible for us to learn more than we generally do about the lives of our pupils, whom we seek from week to week but many of whose problems remain a mystery to us? It is largely a matter of applying ourselves to this task.

Jesus' Use of Life Situations

Closely akin to the practical problem is what we have come to call a life situation. In fact, for teaching purposes this is nothing more than a concrete, particular problem in the form of an incident from life. Jesus taught by means of life situations to an even greater extent than by problems of the ordinary kind. Some of the situations were real, others imaginary. Many of Jesus' parables are, in fact, imaginary life situations; that is, they are imaginary in the sense that they were not actually happening when he told them. They were true to life, however, because they were incidents that might happen and of a type that actually did happen frequently.

Actual Situations

Let us consider, first, some of the actual incidents or situations which Jesus used to teach great truths. One day when he was walking along, apparently a little ahead of his disciples, they became engaged in a heated discussion. Jesus remained silent, taking no part in it. But when they had reached their destination he asked, "What is it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" (Mark 9: 33.) By this time they could see the matter in the proper perspective. They had had opportunity to cool off and were ashamed, so they remained silent. But Jesus knew that they had been arguing as to which of them was the greatest. He did not rebuke them—that would not have been teaching. Instead, he used the incident to indicate to them the spiritual meaning of greatness. The measure of one's stature is the service he renders to his fellows. Have you ever observed discussion among your pupils, or seen a situation arise in their work or play which revealed a wrong attitude? If so, what have you done to set them right?

On another occasion, when Jesus and his disciples were walking through the fields on the Sabbath, some of them to satisfy their hunger rubbed out the kernels of grain and ate them. When the Pharisees observed this they inquired about it, because it was a violation of their tradition. This time Jesus' approach to the incident was direct,

instead of indirect, and he unfolded to them the Christian law of the Sabbath.

As you read the Gospels see how many casual incidents you can find which Jesus turned into occasions for great teaching. You will discover, too, that sometimes Jesus created a situation in order to teach what his pupils needed to learn. An instance occurred during the Last Supper, when he deliberately took a towel and began washing his disciples' feet. Was not this remembered and taken to heart much more deeply than if Jesus had merely uttered the precept that they were to serve one another? He gave them the truth in living and livable form. This indicates why actual happenings of class life, actual conversations which occur, incidents at work and play, make admirable material for teaching religious truth.

Imaginary Life Situations

Most of us, however, cannot share life with our pupils daily. We see them occasionally during the week and we meet them in the class on Sunday. The number of available life situations which arise and are applicable to the course of lessons we may be teaching are few and far between. What then? Jesus did not wait for something to happen; he used typical life situation stories to illustrate his truths, and to lead his hearers into discussion of great religious principles. He created these stories to fit his needs. But, remember, they were not

fairy stories. They were true stories in the sense of being true to life—things that might have happened, that were likely to happen. So vividly did he tell the story of the Good Samaritan, in fact, that many Bible students think it must really have happened. They believe that news had come to Jesus of a recent robbery and that he told the facts just as they occurred. This is pure supposition; the only point here being that our life situations, though we may devise them for a teaching purpose, must represent facts as they are in life, else they cannot take powerful hold on the minds and lives of our pupils.

Would you be surprised to know that Jesus used some stories in condensed form of the type which we call "What Would You Do" incidents? Read Matthew 12: 11. This can be paraphrased somewhat as follows: If you had a sheep which fell into a pit on the Sabbath day, what would you do about it? Would you observe the Sabbath law so strictly that you would let the sheep lie there and suffer, or would you lift it out? In Luke 11: 5-8 we have a similar incident.

Many of Jesus' parables, as we have seen, were really life situation stories which he used for illustrative purposes. They served to make the truth clear and concrete. As Jesus sat in the boat that day by the seashore, and told the parable of the sower, very likely he could see men at work sowing the fields with grain. At any rate, it was an every-

day life situation. The parables of the net and the buried treasure were also taken from life. Jesus used these to illustrate the way of the kingdom and its value to people. The lost coin and the lost sheep were pages from the common life experience of many people, illustrating the value of human personality in the sight of God and the searching, never surrendering love of God as he seeks his own.

To set forth the outworkings of a wrong course of conduct in life Jesus told a number of stories, including the parable of the rich fool and the story of Dives and Lazarus. If we want to know how rich farmers really lived in those days, or how rich men lived in the cities in luxury, we can learn more from these parables than we can from many pages of factual description. That is how true they were to life.

A Look at Ourselves

As you ponder these methods of Jesus, and measure your own teaching by them, what do you discover? Has your teaching been too abstract? Or, are you keeping close to life? Do you know what your pupils are doing on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday? Where they go on Saturday night? What kind of home life they have? What problems they meet in their occupations, if they are employed? Do you know what is going on in the

world in which they live? I do not mean the things that get into the newspapers, but the intimate contacts and associations which are determining for good or for ill their habits and attitudes. Can you interpret the problems they meet in terms of life and at the same time in terms of the eternal truth of the gospel?

One of the urgent tasks of Christian religious education is "to propagate a religion that is able to master the facts and conditions of the confusing world in which our lives are rooted." For this we need a "grim grip on reality," as well as a thorough knowledge of who Jesus was and what he taught. Most of all, we need to be real Christians from the crowns of our heads to the soles of our feet, surcharged with the energies of the spiritual life.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT ABOUT PROJECT TEACHING?

"HURRY up there, Bob, with that next batch of cement. One more mix and our streets are all paved."

The visitor overheard this command as he stepped through the doorway and looked in upon a scene of amazing juvenile activity. Bob brought the cement and soon the miniature concrete mixer —a display model borrowed from a merchant—was whirling once more, turning out the "mix" which other Junior boys carefully laid and trowelled to finish the streets of their city. Around a large table on which the city was being built were ranged some twenty boys and girls with their leader. Miniature houses of wallboard had been erected, all with spacious lawns around them. There were no flats, no tumble-down shacks. Two parks and four large playgrounds were so placed that every inhabitant would be within easy walking distance of a place of recreation, and every boy and girl could play safely off the streets in a protected area.

"This," the leader explained, "is our town, modeled as the boys and girls think it ought to be. It is an ideal Jonesville."

"And where are your churches?" the visitor asked.

"Here it is," said a girl, proudly pointing to a large structure in the very center of the city.

"But there are four churches in Jonesville," protested the visitor. "And you have built only one. Is it a Baptist church, or a Methodist, or what?"

"Oh, it's a church for everybody," piped up a shrill child's voice.

"All the Christians will go to the same church," explained another.

"What about the jail?"

"There isn't any. You see, this is a Golden Rule city, and everybody treats everybody else right. We don't need any jail."

In order to decide what the Christian religion would do for their town, if everybody practiced it, these Juniors had undertaken the project of building a model city in miniature. As each question arose, they discussed and decided it.

What Is a Project?

Did Jesus ever teach like that? Certainly there is no record that he ever led children in working out that kind of project. But let us not be sure that he did not follow the same principles of teaching. A project is a voluntary activity carried out to achieve some purpose which the pupils recognize as worth while, and which has a teaching or educative value. In the larger sense every purposeful experience planned to achieve some definite result is a project. For religious education a project must

be aimed at achieving results in Christian knowledge and character or Christian service. It is a way of learning by doing. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only," said James.

The best way to learn almost anything is by the project principle; for it is a principle rather than a method. When a boy sets about to build a home-made radio set he is learning on the project principle. He attains skill with tools, and acquires a knowledge of radio which he could never acquire as well by merely reading. To be sure, he does read about it. But he reads with a purpose, to solve the problems he encounters in the construction of his set. He looks up what he needs to know. He also studies manufactured sets, and diagrams. He acquires a wide range of information, and since he learns it in terms of doing, he has his knowledge in useful and practical form, not just in theory; and he retains it.

Education as Controlled Experience

In real life people learn by experience. We have come to see that true education is controlled experience. That is, it is the direction and control of experience in such a way that definite skills and particular kinds of knowledge are acquired. When we put a boy at a trade, we control his activity experience, so that he concentrates attention on the use of certain tools, and on acquiring skill at the various activities which are necessary in that trade.

Christian religious education is the control of experience so that our pupils form habits of thinking and living in harmony with Christian ideals. In so far as our pupils enter upon this voluntarily and purposefully, we are really teaching them according to the project principle, though perhaps very imperfectly. Whenever our pupils enter with purpose upon any activity, plan it, carry it through, and have the satisfaction of seeing and enjoying the results of it, they have carried out a project.

Some Projects Jesus Used

If we were to study the life of Jesus to see whether he had his followers execute projects, we should not find very many definite instances. But there are some. He sent forth the twelve disciples (Matthew 10: 1) to teach and heal among their own people. He did not go with them. They were counseled and then put upon their own resources. This was a project experience in Christian service. Later, he sent forth seventy disciples, by twos, on a somewhat similar mission. They were learning by doing.

Discipleship a Life-Sharing Project

The important discovery for us to make, however, is that discipleship itself was a life-sharing project. When Jesus called his first disciples he gave them a motive and purpose which appealed to

them. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He taught them in terms of activity. They did not learn in a formal schoolroom, but by sharing his work with him, trying to live as he lived, and learning to adopt his spiritual attitudes toward life, toward God, and toward their fellow men. From the moment they began to be his companions they entered upon a prolonged period of "controlled experience," which eventually transformed their characters and conduct, as well as their spiritual faith and insight.

We may consider the experience of the first disciples in many different lights. One writer says that following Jesus was for them a project in recapturing the qualities of childhood which Jesus said were necessary for those who were members of his kingdom. They sought and learned again the simplicity and sincerity, the freedom and creativeness and trust of childhood. From another viewpoint we might say they entered upon a project to see whether or not the way of love would win in the long run. They carried this project through with Jesus as far as the cross, but then he had to go on to the supreme sacrifice alone. They saw love win. And it won them over to a life fulfilling his great commission. They lived, thenceforth, to prove to others the winning power of God's love over sin and death, to persuade others to enter upon the lifelong project of the Christian faith.

Your Class Is a Project

The short-sightedness of the project method—so-called—in many Sunday-school classes is that the projects seem fragmentary, unrelated to any big major objective. They look like stunts and nothing more. The thing for us to grasp is that the class itself in all its work and activities is, or should be, a project. It is a project in learning what the Christian life means and how it works. This should be the underlying motive chosen by the class, and all class plans will then be related to this one great project which continues from week to week and quarter to quarter. If we can get our pupils to view the class in this light, it will give continuity of purpose to all the teaching and all the activities. The class will become a social experience in Christian living. Instead of trying to indoctrinate our pupils, we shall try to lead them into voluntary, purposeful search of the Bible to discover what Christian ideals are; and into experience with putting those ideals to the test in conduct. We shall have them find out for themselves what the effect of Christian living is, how it works. We shall have them acquire skill in Christian service by choosing and executing plans for serving others.

Finding Christ Through Experience

In discussing why there are so many unconverted church members, Canon Charles E. Raven (in

" Christ and Modern Education ") thinks it is the fault of our teaching. We have tried to make Christians by indoctrination, have used persuasion to get people to confess to a belief in a system of words, without first leading them into an experience of what the Christian life is like. It is a mistake, he thinks, " to insist upon confession before there has been opportunity of finding out the experience that underlies it." Did Jesus make that " mistake "? Or, did he ask his disciples first to share life with him, to see his ideals in daily living and learn what it meant, practically, to trust God as he trusted him? Only after they had had this experience did they know what it really meant to be followers of Christ. It was in this way that they became certain that no matter what others thought of him, for them he was more than Elijah or one of the prophets, he was the Son of God.

If we make our class a project, in which the lessons are a series of sub-projects leading our pupils to test and experience the results of Christian thinking and living, we shall be following Jesus' way, and we shall be more certain of permanent results. All this does not mean that we should not seek to bring our pupils to decision for Christ. But it means that we should lead them to Christ through experience and activity and not just through indoctrination.

Learning by Doing

In the same manner also we should help them form Christian habits of thought and action. We cannot teach them to pray by defining prayer, but by having them enter actively into the class prayer period. We cannot teach them right attitudes toward other races by merely lecturing them concerning the Christian point of view, or even by studying a Scripture lesson which illustrates it. They need to test out the Christian attitude among people of other races with whom they make contact. Just as, under Jesus' direction, the first disciples learned to live his religion, so under our direction, with divine help, must our pupils learn. Our class then will be a project in discovering what the Christian religion is by how it works; in learning what we ought to believe by learning to believe it; in learning what we ought to do by learning to do it; in learning what habits we should form by forming them. All of it should be done purposefully, in a spirit of Christian adventure. Our class should breathe the atmosphere of real life, not the atmosphere of the cloister or the schoolroom. Our pupils must be encouraged to develop freedom and initiative by carrying over the Sunday class projects into week-day experiments in Christian living.

CHAPTER X

TEACHING BY LIVING

IN some of the preceding chapters dealing with some of the specific teaching methods of Jesus, the reader must have sensed a certain inevitable superficiality. The heart of the matter was not being reached. We began to strike deeper when we noted that Jesus' entire ministry was for his closest disciples a life-sharing project. Jesus taught by comradeship.

Comradeship

Teaching by comradeship is essentially letting what we are teach for us. It will come out in what we say and do, but almost equally in what we refrain from saying and doing. A teacher who is an unwise comrade had better not teach at all. A teacher who has no time for comradeship is severely handicapped. A teacher who does not realize the crucial value of comradeship in teaching must have an erroneous conception of the relation between religion and life. It may be all very well for the absent-minded professor of chemistry to become a laboratory recluse. He can still teach chemistry. But the Christian religion is an art of living, a way of life, and can be taught only in terms of life. Herein lies the great value of the

church as a fellowship in Christian living, and of the organized class as a smaller, closer fellowship in Christian thought and activity.

Does this suggest a certain justification for the widespread demand by church people for pastors with social qualities, who are "good mixers"? Should a teacher be a "good mixer"? If that term seems a bit odious, it is because it carries a somewhat flippant connotation. We cannot describe Jesus by such a term. We cannot think of him as a professional back-slapper and hand-shaker. No, that is not just what we mean by the need of social qualities. It is something much deeper. Jesus as a teacher was frank, sincere, earnest. He also had a sense of humor. He showed great generosity in judging his companions, deep understanding of their natures. He encouraged, but never flattered. He spoke with authority but was never superior toward others. What better word is there than comrade? Jesus, while Lord and Master, was a hearty, trusty comrade. Did ever any of Jesus' pupils hesitate to approach him and talk to him about any question next to their hearts?

If our lives have anything worth sharing with our pupils, we must find time and opportunity for comradeship with them. And we must make the most of all our contacts with our class, in the spirit of comradeship. Let us realize right now that teaching by comradeship is a large part of our

actual present work. The process is not staged; it goes on without conscious effort on our part or theirs. Our pupils are absorbing our attitudes unconsciously. To test this, recall the Sunday-school teacher who had the most influence on your life. Do you not discover that while you perhaps can remember little or nothing he taught you, you have a vivid impression of his character and personality? A well-known minister relates that in the last two years of his high-school course he had a Sunday-school teacher who was generally regarded by the church people as not especially qualified for the work. He confesses that often he went away from her classes without having any real mastery of the facts of the lesson; but always he felt a new stimulus, a stronger ambition for right living. All through his college course, he says, when testings and temptations were numerous, she was like a living presence with him, powerfully influencing him for good.

Admitting that this teacher was not strong in imparting Bible information, would it have been wise for the school to have put in her place a teacher who could drill the pupils thoroughly in the lesson facts, but could not send them away fired with new desire for the attainment of a brave, high-minded Christlike character? Would you explain the secret of this teacher's power by saying that she herself had a great enthusiasm for the Christian

life, and so exemplified this life that unconsciously in the comradeship of the lesson hour her pupils absorbed her attitude from her?

Conversation

The greater part of comradeship finds its expression in conversation. We sometimes speak of teaching by the conversational method, but the word seems a misfit here. It is the lack of method, the unconventionality of conversation which gives it its high value as a revealer and transmitter of character. Until we began studying Jesus' methods as a teacher, we probably would never have thought of his wayside conversations with his disciples as a method of teaching at all. They were part of his sharing of life with them. They were not studied attempts to teach.

The language of the King James Version is archaic. Its now formal thou's and thee's were simply the common English speech of King James' day, but they keep us from realizing the complete unconventionality of Jesus' conversations. Even so, if we will pick up almost any present-day treatise on Christian teachings or Christian theology and compare the style and diction with that of Jesus in the Gospels we will be struck by the contrast. On the one hand we shall find the artificial style of speculative thought, the careful precise choice of technical terms, and usually sentences that twist themselves into labyrinths of involved phrases. On

the other hand, there is the quiet impressiveness of Jesus' words. His language is simple, his speech was that of the common people. His sayings are full of surprises, he used the kind of picturesque phrases that have always appealed alike to the educated and the uneducated.

We hear and read much about the need of impressing the pupil's mind with the truth through two or more channels, so that the impression will be lasting. In younger classes we are urged to use handwork and pictures so that manual activity and sight may aid hearing in the learning process. If we teach older classes we are expected to use projects and social activities which embody the lesson teaching. This is all very good, but do we realize that conversational teaching may of itself make a twofold appeal? Two or three years ago, in one of a series of lectures at Oberlin College, Dr. Adolph Deissmann called attention to the fact that the words of Jesus were really of the character of object lessons. He spoke of the "light and the candlestick, of the city on the hill, of father and child, bread and fish, egg and scorpion, of asking and giving, of seed and crop, of hunger and thirst." In such a method of speech, said Dr. Deissmann, "the listener not only hears but also looks and sees, and what is heard and seen remains."

A certain college-bred young man was spending a long vacation in a rather primitive community back in the Ozark hills, twenty miles from a rail-

road. He was prevailed upon to speak to the folks of a little Sunday-school in a sort of informal service at the close of the regular Sunday-school hour, there being no regular church service. On the first Sunday he illuminated his talk chiefly by descriptions of frescoes in great cathedrals, and the celebrated mural paintings in the Library of Congress. Why do you think that few people were impressed? Peter Cartwright, great pioneer preacher, took his object lessons and illustrations from the forests and prairies where his people lived; as when he described the agonies of a sin-cursed soul in terms of a coon being torn to pieces by hunting dogs. Which followed the method of Jesus more closely, the uneducated pioneer preacher or the college-bred young man?

As Jesus taught in the figures and mental imagery of his day, we must teach in the thought patterns of our day. We cannot ignore what our pupils are thinking about. We dare not cast our thoughts in the molds of forty years ago if we are teaching young people who were not alive that long ago. Do we realize what tremendous mental revolutions have been worked by the industrial and scientific progress of the past few decades? Quite aside from new theories and hypotheses, the whole imagery of thought is radically changed. Who can hope to teach young people today without sharing life with them enough to think in their terms?

What do you think of the statement that Jesus

would probably be more at home with the younger people of today than with many of the older generation, just as he was more at home with the unconventional younger people of Galilee than with those Jerusalemites who were sticklers for religious and social conventionality? Have you discovered that the unconventionality of Jesus' conversations is one of the secrets of their teaching power? Life itself is not conventional. Conventionality is something we put on, like a coat. Herman Harrell Horne in his admirable study of "Jesus, the Master Teacher" (page 41) points out that "Almost any book of polite literature dealing with the art of conversation will include such hints as these: Don't use slang; avoid exaggeration; be genial; think before you speak; don't pun; don't argue; exclude religion and politics as topics; conceal temper; don't interrupt the speaker; adapt your conversation to your company; don't correct another in public." Then the author asks how Jesus' conversations as recorded differ in purpose from those of polite society, and whether Jesus ever broke the rules of conversational etiquette as laid down in our books on correct usage. He suggests that if Jesus had engaged only in polite conversations we should never have heard of him.

Personal Habits

Jesus' conversations had wonderful teaching power not only because they were life-sharing con-

versations, but because they were character-revealing. They revealed his constant attitude of trust in his heavenly Father, his constant purpose of good will toward all men. His whole spiritual nature came forth, revealed, in his words. This suggests that our conversation grows out of our personal habits of thought and life. In this transforming process of sharing life with Jesus, his disciples learned and to a degree "caught" from him the habit of complete reliance on God, of communion with him, of frank facing of facts—even the unpleasant fact of his coming crucifixion. They learned the meaning of his habit of forgiveness of others, his thoughtfulness of others.

He taught them how to pray, but they wanted him to teach them because they observed that he was a master of prayer. Can you teach trust in God and the communion that naturally flows from it, unless you have it yourself? Jesus taught his disciples to forgive unto seventy times seven. Would the words have counted for anything, had he shown a spirit of vengeance or bitterness on the cross? He taught service to others. Would the lesson have been learned if he had not himself constantly served others?

What would Jesus think of trying to teach in words what we do not have in our lives? He did not give talks to teachers, but we can find a few sayings which seem to answer this and similar ques-

tions. He spoke of some of the official teachers of his day as the blind leading the blind, and he predicted that a disastrous outcome was inevitable. Read Matthew 12: 34, 35: " . . how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." How does this apply to the relation between our teaching and our inner lives? It is easy to teach if teaching merely means drilling pupils in Bible facts and religious duties. It is not so difficult, if teaching merely means learning modern religious pedagogy and sticking close to its principles. But if teaching is life-sharing, then rich, deep Christian living is its first essential. You cannot share what you do not have.

Directors of religious education, on being installed over a church school that has not previously had professional leadership, sometimes wonder why classes will fight to keep a teacher who is obviously " old-fashioned," when the director wants to substitute a person who glitters with the latest training available. Well, this is the reason: The old-fashioned teacher has the good life from which to teach, and the pupils love her; she wields love's magic over them. If conventionally accepted standards of pedagogy constitute the main goal of religious education, by all means get rid of such a

teacher. But if learning the way of the Christian faith and life is the main goal, by all means leave her undisturbed. Which is it, in your school?

Personality

In all that we have here said about teaching by living and by sharing life with our pupils, we have implied the need of a strong Christian personality. The great final secret of Jesus' marvelous power as a teacher was his divine personality. This suggests why we cannot hope to teach with such marvelous power as Jesus had. But we can follow his methods, and we can keep cultivating a stronger Christian personality by remaining ourselves his pupils. If we can say sincerely, "The Lord is my teacher," can keep learning from him, our teaching personalities can be daily enriched. If we keep sharing our lives at their best with our pupils, we shall grow as we give.

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